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DOE FOR CAROLYN GAY

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ABUJA 00000787 001.2 OF 005

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[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. The April 21 presidential and National Assembly elections were marred with irregularities similar to those of the April 14 gubernatorial and state assembly polls (Ref. C). However, in some instances, irregularities observed were significantly worse than the previous weekend's election. Reprinted presidential ballots ordered following the April 16 Supreme Court decision restoring Vice President Atiku's candidacy did not arrive in Abuja until late afternoon April 20. Mission observers report some locations received presidential ballots late on the 21st (delaying the opening of polls to as late as 1600 in some instances) and some never received ballots or other materials and no vote was held. Polling stations across the country received insufficient numbers of presidential ballots, and the ballots which were received were not numbered and did not list candidate names nor photos. They only showed party symbols. In some states, polling stations never opened in areas outside the state capital. Mission observers estimate a turnout of 10-20 percent at polling stations that actually opened. END SUMMARY.

North Central Zone

[1](#)2. (SBU) Much like the country as a whole, observations in the north central zone ranged from a fairly organized, transparent process to disorganization and blatant fraud. There was sporadic violence in some areas, with at least one person killed in Benue state and more than a half dozen killed in neighboring Nassarawa state. Mission observers in both Niger and Plateau states reported most of the election materials were delivered and voting took place in an environment of relative calm. In Niger state, voting was generally well organized, despite the fact that no Senate ballots were cast in the polling stations visited by Mission observers due to a lack of ballots for this race. Many

polling places had separate ballot boxes for each seat being contested. Niger state vote counts witnessed by Embassy observers were transparent.

13. (SBU) Mission observers in Plateau state also reported a relatively orderly process, with polling stations well supplied and voting conducted in a relatively orderly fashion. Mission observers noted some polling stations never opened; local contacts alleged these stations were located in opposition-controlled areas. Observers visited a number of local government areas, including home to the deputy Senate President, a ruling party stalwart who lost in his bid for reelection. Voter turnout was light throughout the state.

14. (SBU) Mission observers in Benue state reported a thoroughly disorganized and fraudulent process. Mission and other international observers witnessed cases of ballot snatching, ballot box stuffing, intimidation, and delivery of voting material by PDP party agents (including the Governor's brother). Many rural areas did not receive materials, and voter turnout was in the neighborhood of 10-20 percent where voting did occur. In many polling stations, despite the low turnout, mission observers noted vote tabulations indicating nearly 100 percent turnout.

North West Zone

15. (SBU) The Mission fielded fourteen observers in Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara States. For security reasons, Mission personnel were not deployed to Kano State. Throughout the North West, most polling stations opened between 1130 and 1400, though areas of Kaduna North opened as late as 1630. Regardless of the late opening, polls closed between 1630 and 1800. Angry mobs had gathered to protest the late opening in several towns in Katsina, Kano, and

ABUJA 00000787 002.2 OF 005

Kaduna North. Voting in Sokoto and Zamfara was reported to be calm throughout the day. Overall, voter turnout was low, due in part to high voter apathy. We estimate that voter turnout averaged 10-25 percent where voting was held. Domestic observer contacts in Kaduna South and parts of Katsina and Kano State report that no elections had taken place at all.

Mission observers report that most polling stations were managed by poorly trained and inadequate INEC staff and received insufficient materials, including ballots (no Senatorial ballots delivered in Kaduna State), ink pads, voters rolls, and tally sheets. In Buhari's hometown in Katsina State, fewer than 50% of ballots were delivered for the amount of registered voters in Daura LGA, fueling anger at INEC officials there. In fact, Buhari himself did not cast a ballot that day, as his name did not appear on the voters roll. Women voter turnout was high or equal to men in Sokoto, Zamfara, and Kaduna North, but low in other areas of the zone.

16. (SBU) Endemic underage voting was observed in Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara States. At one station in Katsina metropolis, Mission personnel observed a group of irate children hound PDP party agents when they refused to pay them for casting a PDP vote. Party agents and security service personnel were seen hovering around ballot boxes, noting for whom voters cast ballots. Only PDP party agents were present at many polling stations in Katsina metropolis and Kaduna North. Neither the privacy of balloting nor security of the ballot box was protected. At most polling stations throughout the North West, the ballot count was methodical and orderly; however, the collation centers appeared tense and chaotic in Katsina. Since most polling stations in Kaduna, Katsina, and Kano did not have tally sheets, results from these stations ran the risk of not being accepted at collation centers. ANPP party agents present at polling stations in Katsina refused to sign result sheets at collation centers, decrying the results and electoral process there as fraudulent and opaque. Also in Katsina, Mission

personnel personally witnessed PDP party agents and INEC officials changing tally sheet results just 500 meters from a tabulation center.

17. (SBU) Isolated incidents of elections-related violence were reported across Kaduna, Katsina, and Kano States. In Kaduna North, Mission observers witnessed riots in and around INEC headquarters and other parts of Kaduna metropolis. Contacts also reported that rigging and ballot box stuffing were taking place at private residences and hotels in and around Kaduna, Katsina, and Kano city. Mission contacts report that a PDP chieftain and former official of the Sabon Gari local government was arrested in Zaria on election day for illegal possession of ballot boxes.

North East Zone

18. (SBU) The Mission fielded seven observers in Borno, Gombe and Bauchi states. Though polls in Maidugari opened by approximately 1100, polls in Gombe and Bauchi did not open until afternoon (sometimes as late as 1500). A few rural polls were opened late in the afternoon in Borno state, but Mission and other international observers found no polls open outside the state capitals in Gombe and Bauchi states. Despite the late opening, polls in areas of Gombe state closed as early as 1800 and in Bauchi, which was under a 2000 curfew, by 1900 (with some observed closing as early as 1700). The Borno State INEC office in Maidugari reported only 37 percent of needed presidential ballots were delivered, though they had held out hopes for more. In Gombe, all polling stations visited by Mission observers lacked ballots for the House of Representatives. Voter turnout was low in all three states, as large numbers of voters who had gathered as early as 0700 departed and did not return once ballots were received.

19. (SBU) Mission observers did not directly observe fraud being perpetrated; however, observers did witness a polling station in Bauchi near the end of the day where polling agents were continuing to authenticate ballots with the

ABUJA 00000787 003.2 OF 005

official's stamp as they spoke to Poloffs, despite stating they expected no more voters. Mission observers noted polling officials in one area of Gombe city who were handing out ballots without checking names against the voters registry. In Maeltideba (outside Gombe city), residents told Mission observers an INEC person came earlier in the day with one box of ballots, allowed two people to vote, then announced voting had finished and left with the materials. Mission observers noted that given the quickest time observed of approximately 2-3 minutes processing time per voter (to show voters card and receive a ballot), even 150 voters per polling station would be an extremely liberal estimate -- and that would only apply to polling stations where voting took place.

110. (SBU) The mood in polling stations across the North East was much more tense as people demonstrated considerably more frustration than during the April 14 elections. People still in line by late afternoon had often stood since early morning. Others simply gave up or did not come to vote at all, as evidenced by the larger number of stores and businesses open on April 21. IRI observers reported unrest in northern Bauchi state as early as 1300. At 1810, Mission observers at a collation center in Bauchi witnessed a group of 30 young men who stormed into a collation center to "check on the status of the count," shouting at officials that they would return.

South East Zone

111. (SBU) In the South East region, the Mission fielded eight observers to four states: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, and Enugu.

Similar to the previous weekend, the polls opened late across the South East and in many areas, never opened at all. Where voting occurred, turnout was observed to be less than fifteen percent, ballot boxes were generally not sealed, and many polling stations lacked or did not use voter registers. Observers also witnessed obvious intimidation and ballot box stuffing at some locations.

¶12. (SBU) Our observers in Abia visited four of the state's local government areas (LGAs) between 1000 and 1800 but never found an open polling station. The National Assembly elections in Abia were all postponed because of printing errors on the ballots, and presidential ballots arrived in the state at approximately 1230 but LGAs did not start voting until after 1600. Some voting took place in the state capitol Umuahia between 1630 and 1800, according to NDI observers. USG observers were also unable to find a single open polling station in Anambra state, despite traveling from Awka to Onitsha and back again and stopping by some polling stations multiple times. In several locations, angry potential voters told the USG staff to spread the word internationally that they had been disenfranchised. However, in most of Anambra state voters appeared apathetic: people were working, shopping, and going about normal business and the crowds of people waiting to vote were smaller than the previous week.

¶13. (SBU) Voting began in some parts of Ebonyi state as early as 1330, but in rural areas there were still no ballots late in the afternoon. In areas where voting took place, many polling stations lacked official tally sheets to record results, ballot boxes generally were not sealed, and voters frequently lacked privacy. Witnessed turnout was less than fifteen percent (at polling stations where voting occurred). In Enugu state, voting began in Enugu town and Nsukka around ¶1530. However, observers found polling stations that still had no election materials as late as 1730. Many polling stations lacked voter lists and others which had lists never used them. Election officials seem to be allowing anyone with proof of registration to vote.

¶14. (SBU) There were polling stations in Enugu and Ebonyi where despite a late start, a relatively fair polling and counting process took place; however, observers also visited stations plagued by fraud and intimidation. In Abakaliki, Econoff saw a ballot box containing a large clump of

ABUJA 00000787 004.2 OF 005

presidential ballots, apparently stuffed. At another station in Enugu town, the poll opened at 1455 but the ballot box was removed by soldiers at 1550 after only 40 of 1,800 voters had cast ballots. Poloff witnessed youths working for the Enugu Secretary to the State Government forcibly removing a ballot

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box in Opi, while British observers saw books of ballots that had been pre-thumbprinted for PDP in Ayiere.

South South Zone

¶15. (SBU) The Mission fielded no observers in the South South, but remained in contact with other international and domestic observers and monitored radio broadcasts in the area. Voting reportedly did not take place in most of the region. Even in Edo State, where the April 14 election had gone somewhat smoothly, many polls never opened. Observers say that they saw fewer than half the polling stations ever opened. Those that did began balloting after noon and were plagued by a paucity of materials. Voters were apathetic and observers and local monitors estimate less than 15 percent turnout where voting did occur.

¶16. (SBU) Throughout the rest of the region, virtually no voting took place. Some observers report that more polling stations opened for the Presidential election than were

observed the week before; however, they still estimate that less than 20 percent of the polling places opened in Delta, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Cross Rivers states and less than 10 percent of polling places opened in Bayelsa state. The late arrival of voting materials to different areas in Cross River postponed the presidential and senate elections one day; the House of Representative election is scheduled to hold Thursday April 26. Turnout was characterized as "extremely low" throughout the region and some observers thought that "10 percent turnout would be generous" for the few polling places that actually opened. An opposition contact in Delta state said violence and massive rigging by the PDP on April 14 resulted in low voter turnout and what he described simply as "surrender." INEC staff were identified by locals as "known employees" of the government or the PDP.

South West Zone

¶17. (SBU) The Mission fielded observers in Lagos, Ogun and Oyo states. Many polls opened by 1000, while others opened as late as 1400 in Ogun state. Most polling stations in Lagos State had sufficient ballots for the number of voters that came to cast ballots, though the ballots would have been insufficient if turnout had been higher. Other locations received more ballots than they had registered voters; still others told observers INEC promised to deliver more ballots during the day. Some polling stations lacked other supplies (such as cuticle marking pens) and/or failed to post voter lists. In some places, poll workers called out voters' names from the voter registration list, which in Lagos and Ogun States were not ordered alphabetically or by voter registration number. In Lagos, observers noted that voting officials manning late-opening polling stations appeared to use this technique to speed the process of distributing ballots. Some cases of underage voting were observed.

¶18. (SBU) Observers noted low turnout and a range of irregularities including failure to ink fingers, failure to check names against the voter registration list, and party agents performing the work of INEC staff. At one polling station in Oyo state, PDP officials ordered voters to leave after which Mission observers watched PDP agents and INEC workers fingerprint ballots and stuff them in the ballot box. At another Oyo polling place, a Mission observer reported that there was no voter registration list and that all ballots had been pre-stamped for PDP. In Ogun State, observers noted a polling station which had been open only one and a half hours had already processed 250 voters. In another case, a polling station was observed to have opened at 1400 and closed at 1430, after having ostensibly processed 600 voters. In Abeokuta, the capital of Ogun State, observers spoke with a group of people who said they were

ABUJA 00000787 005.2 OF 005

boycotting the elections because the week before they had experienced intimidation by persons with guns and other weapons. An EU observer corroborated this account, noting that the level of intimidation had caused her to return to her hotel. Also in Ogun State, observers noted AC and blank ballots being counted for PDP during the vote tally. Many of these PDP and AC ballots appeared to have the same round print mark which looked not like a thumbprint but more like the tip of a finger or a round stamp mark. A DPA candidate told observers that his party was not on the ballot in three wards in Ogun State.

¶19. (SBU) In Lagos State, there was considerable confusion as to whether voting should be conducted for the Senate race. Ballots were never delivered to many polling stations, but were delivered to others. In one place where ballots for the Senate race had been delivered, persons claiming to "control the ward" said that voting for all three races should take place and dismissed postponement of the Senate elections as a rumor. In another polling station, poll workers said an INEC official informed them the Senate elections had been

postponed; however polling agents continued to hand out Senate ballots. In another polling station, persons of unknown affiliation announced that Senatorial voting should not take place and poll workers should withdraw the ballots.

¶20. (SBU) Observers noted that some polls closed as early as 1430, while others remained open until the official 1700 closing time. Where observers watched the count, procedures were orderly. Observers were unable to observe vote counts at collation centers in Ogun State, although they did hear an election official tell security guards to prevent observers and any non-INEC officials from entering the collation area after the arrival of vote tallies. INEC announced victory for PDP in Ogun, Osun and Oyo States, and for AC candidate Atiku Abubakar in Lagos State.

¶21. (U) This is a joint Embassy/Consulate cable.
CAMPBELL